

Armed Services Committee studying the issue or looking at it. After all that happened—and it is unfortunate people went to jail over it in the Air Force, and others—we ordered, the Congress did, that a bid process take place. There were two bidders. Only two entities could supply this kind of aircraft. The Air Force selected the one they thought was best.

Some people did not like that, and we had a big fuss, and now we are at a position where we could literally be looking at a delay of 2 or 3 more years. It has already been delayed about 7 years. This is very disturbing and very concerning to me ultimately because the Air Force is going to be further delayed, substantially, in a new aircraft being chosen and put into the fleet. It can save money in the long run because it will be newer, require less upkeep and maintenance, carry more fuel, and it has more capability. It can do the work of three airplanes at once.

I know Senator WARNER and others on our committee, when this issue arose—Senator LEVIN and Senator MCCAIN—felt that a bid was the right thing to do. We ordered that we pass legislation to do that. I am sorry the Defense Department seems to have given up and punted it. Many are estimating this could result in a delay of 3 years before the matter comes to a conclusion now.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, actually it was a series of appropriations. The committee approved it in the House and the Senate—the House Armed Services Committee. When it came to our committee—at that time I was the chairman—we decided this contract was not right, and a lot of work subsequent to that has been done to try to correct it. The Deputy Secretary of Defense contacted me yesterday. I look upon this latest development with some concern because this airplane is needed for the U.S. inventory.

But I thank the Senator for his support through the years. It was our committee that stopped that contract which we felt was faulty at that time, and the rest is history.

Mr. SESSIONS. I could not agree more, I say to Senator WARNER. I thank the Senator for his leadership at that time. Basically, it did point out, did it not, I ask Senator WARNER, that the authorizing committee is a valuable committee and that those kinds of major programs should be taken through the committee of authorization? Would the Senator agree to that as a matter of historical perspective here in the Senate?

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I share the views of my distinguished good friend.

Mr. President, I have been informed—and I will await the leadership to make the formal announcements—but I do believe we are going to move to some votes, hopefully, this afternoon on our bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Very good.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I further ask that at the hour of 12:30, the Chair declare a moment of silence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE VICTIMS AND FAMILIES OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, TERRORIST ATTACKS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the September 11 attacks.

(Moment of silence.)

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent to be recognized and speak for a moment on this day, 9/11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we just commemorated a moment of silence for those who were lost on 9/11. Of course, for the husbands and wives, sons and daughters, fathers and mothers and friends, that moment of silence, in a sense, lasts every day, every moment.

In New York, of course, we lost close to 3,000 people. Some people I knew—a person I played basketball with in high school; a firefighter I was close to and worked with to encourage people to donate blood; a business man who helped me on the way up; the range of people who were lost in every walk of life, every ethnic group, every profession, in every way of thinking. The enormity still, 7 years later, is hard to have it sink in. Furthermore, when one thinks of just the uselessness of this tragedy, it is even more confounding.

There are many things to say in the advent of 9/11 that would be relevant on this floor, but today is not the day for that. Today we just think and remember and try to do everything we can to give solace to those we know who mourn and will mourn for the rest of their lives the senselessness of this tragedy that took loved ones from them.

So I just wish to say to those who do walk around with holes in their hearts as a result of 9/11: We will never forget.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, if I may just for a moment echo the comments of the Senator from New York, this morning I watched on television the ceremony at the Pentagon. As I watched the calling of the names, a photo flashed on the screen of each individual. What you saw were young military men, you saw a lieutenant colonel, you saw the faces of whole families wiped out, young people, older people, you saw every race. In a sense, when you looked at the benches and the water flowing under the benches and the maples that will grow around them, as you listened to the sad song of the pipers, you realized what a great country this is and how we respect every single human life and how important that is; also, how important it is that the message remain true, that the message remain full of heart but also full of vigilance that this must never happen again in our homeland.

So I wish to join Senator SCHUMER and send our best wishes, our sympathy, our sorrow to these families 7 years later, and our thanks to those who gave their lives in the Pentagon.

I had a chance to sit down with the family of a captain of the American Airlines plane that flew into the Pentagon. It was very revealing because at the time they were convinced it was the heroic gesture of this captain in turning the plane away from the U.S. Capitol that played a role. I want them to know that I was thinking of them both during the Pentagon ceremony and the ceremony in front of the Capitol.

So all those victims remain in our hearts and in our minds, and we consecrate ourselves to work on their behalf.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the innocent Americans who were killed in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. I ask that we commemorate the emergency responders who provided relief in the aftermath of the attacks. I also ask that we salute our brave men and women in uniform who have volunteered to serve their country in this time of need. Not to be forgotten are the families who support our troops and the families who lost loved ones on this tragic day; to them we must also pay tribute.

We should continue to remember the family of Al Marchand from Alamogordo, NM, a flight attendant on United Airlines flight 175 and one of the first casualties on that horrific day. He and his family remain in my thoughts and those of my fellow New Mexicans. Since that day, many New Mexicans have volunteered to serve their country by entering the ranks of our Armed Forces. Some of these brave men and women today live with the injuries and scars they received in this fight. Sadly, some lost their lives in

this war to protect our way of life. I pay tribute to Army SSG Kevin C. Roberts of Farmington, NM, and Army SGT Gary D. Willett of Alamogordo, NM, the two most recent casualties from New Mexico in the ongoing global war on terror.

Seven years have passed since al-Qaida terrorists struck our homeland. Yet even after 7 years, threats against our country still exist. We must continue on with vigilance and remain dedicated to the protection and security of our great Nation. Even now, the images and shock of that day are still with me. And while I am, years later, still saddened by our losses, I am also heartened by all the heroic acts of our citizens in what was the most shocking attack on our homeland. In the months following the attacks, our brave men and women in uniform toppled the regime in Afghanistan that provided a base of operations for the terrorists who carried out the 2001 attacks. We helped that country establish a democratic government and are working with allies in NATO to bring peace and stability to a country that has spent much of its recent history in the mire of civil war. It is a dangerous mission that continues today.

One of the important lessons that political and military leaders learned from the 2001 terrorist attacks was that America cannot stand by idly as threats to its security develop far from our shores. This required our intelligence and law enforcement agencies to work with friends and allies around the world and with each other to gather actionable intelligence that would help us disrupt terrorist plots at home and abroad. To help consolidate our domestic defense system, the Congress created the Department of Homeland Security. The Department of Homeland Security was organized to prevent attacks within the United States, reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and to minimize the damage and assist in the recovery from terrorists' attacks in America. The Congress also followed the recommendations of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States—the 9/11 Commission—and passed historic legislation that reformed the agencies that make up our intelligence community. While these reforms were important and necessary, the disruption of a recent plot to hijack planes flying from London to the United States, shows us that our enemies are still bent on bringing terror into our cities.

Many of my fellow citizens from the State of New Mexico have contributed to strengthening our defenses in the global war on terror. An urban rescue team traveled from New Mexico to Virginia to help recover survivors from the ruins at the Pentagon. Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories helped identify the strains of anthrax that were found in government and office buildings shortly after the terrorist attacks. They helped develop a biological threat detection system that

was deployed at the 2002 Winter Olympics, the 2004 Summer Olympics, and in locations around our Nation's Capital. The National Labs have also been at the forefront in developing tools to detect and dispose of materials that can be made used as a "dirty bomb" or other weapon of mass destruction. Finally, the National Infrastructure and Analysis Center, NISAC, is being used to develop response strategies for government officials and first responders for large and complex crises.

Over the past 7 years, we have learned a good deal more about how the attack was planned and executed, and we have spent countless man hours and resources to make our Nation safer. We can be proud of the fact that we have worked to implement most of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. We are more prepared as a nation for these types of dangers than we were prior to September 11, 2001, but this is a struggle that will not end with the same clarity and decisiveness of battles past. Therefore, even as we continue to adjust to a post-9/11 world, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to prevent such a tragedy from occurring on American soil again. I hope all Americans take time to reflect on the events of September 11, 2001, honor those that have fallen, and rededicate themselves for the struggle ahead.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, 7 years ago, nearly 3,000 Americans perished in the worst terrorist attack on our soil. Today, let us remember the innocent lives lost in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania and continue to pray for healing for their families.

The stories of their heroism, compassion, and last words spoken to a loved one all serve to inspire and remind us of the pain of that tragic day.

This anniversary is a somber reminder of the serious threats we face. Generations of Americans have fought for our country's freedom, and on this day, we can take solace in knowing our nation remains committed to preserving that blessing.

Since 9/11, the United States has led a global campaign against terrorism. Our Nation is safer because of the sacrifices of those serving in the cause of freedom, including the men and women of our Armed Forces, our National Guard, and our intelligence communities.

Our effort has been enhanced by the cooperation of allied nations that share our desire to see a world dominated by peace, freedom, and the rule of law.

On this day, let us remember those Americans who lost their lives in the attacks of 9/11, those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country, and those who continue to defend our Nation today. God bless these individuals and their families, and may God bless America.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today, like any other day, Americans will be busy getting to work, getting the kids off to school, and getting dinner on the table. Despite all those de-

mands, however, today Americans will also pause to remember, with deep sadness, the terrible events that occurred on September 11, 2001. We are united by that sadness, just as we are united by our conviction that we must do everything in our power to prevent another such tragedy.

Our common purpose today is to honor the memory of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001; to remember a day that began like any other, but quickly descended into chaos, with fire and smoke that engulfed the World Trade Towers, billowed out of the Pentagon, and rose from an empty field near Shanksville, PA. But 7 years later, we not only remember what was lost, but what rose from the ashes, because since that day we have all learned a great deal about the strength of the American people. September 11 reminds us how resilient we are as a nation, and in a time when our Nation faces so many challenges at home and abroad, that reservoir of strength is invaluable.

It is with great pride in the American people, and deep gratitude to people around the world who stood with us on that day, that I remember that day, and its aftermath. I have so often thought, then and now, how senseless those attacks were, and how people from all over the world perished alongside so many Americans. It is our great diversity of every kind—of our people, our culture, our geography—that makes us such a strong and vibrant country. No act, however terrible, has ever changed that, or ever will.

This is a difficult day for all of us, but especially for those who lost loved ones on that day. We share in their sorrow, even though we cannot imagine their pain. In a day that may otherwise seem ordinary, we are all jolted back to the tragic events of that day in September which began with such calm, blue skies. It was a day unlike any we have ever known and unlike any we hope to see ever again. Seven years later, however, it is heartening to see how we have moved forward from that tragedy. More than ever, we are committed to our communities, to each other, and to this great Nation and its highest ideals. That is where our resilience lies, and, on this day of all days, that is what makes us stronger as a nation and as a people.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, on this day of commemoration, 7 years after the attack here on American soil, I think it is very important and proper for all of us here in the Senate and all across America to stop and reflect on the great peace and security we have in America; the fact that there are so many policemen and first responders and others who make sure America remains safe.

And to be sure, today it is important for us to remember those who gave their lives on 9/11—those who died in the field in Pennsylvania, and those who died at the Pentagon and in New York City.

It is also important, as we reflect on 9/11 and the events of, now, 7 years ago, to recognize the more than half a million men and women who wear the uniform of a firefighter or a law enforcement officer in our Nation. These men and women who are out there on the front lines of law enforcement really are the ones who keep America safe day and night, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are able to live in the security of our homes, our communities, and counties in large part because we have more than half a million men and women who are out there every day making sure the laws of the Nation are upheld.

So today, as we commemorate that horrific tragedy of 7 years ago, it is important that we commemorate the lives of those who gave their lives that day and the lives of the families of those who died and were hurt that day. It also is important for us to recognize the great sacrifice and contribution of the men and women of law enforcement of America as well as the firefighters and first responders of our great country.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, today is a time for reflection and review of a particular moment in American history that is not yet fully established in the manner I believe it should be. America changed more on this day 7 years ago than perhaps at any other time in our history, save those moments we were at war. But the effects that linger on are far greater than those when we were engaged in wars or experienced natural disasters.

Our world has changed so much since that day, September 11, 2001, because we are reminded every day at some point in time, sometimes several points in time, about what changed. Our freedoms were substantially chipped away. One can't go anywhere—and this affects all ages, including our young friends who are pages this year—without having an ID card, without waiting in long lines, such as with transportation at an airport, without seeing uniformed personnel all over, keeping an eye out for terrorists, unable to move with the same freedom we knew before 9/11.

Though it is 7 years ago that this terrible catastrophe happened, the fact is, on this day, as with any other day, I stopped to have my car examined. I had the dogs sniffing around to see if we were carrying anything that might represent a threat in our vehicles. Much of it started with 9/11.

Today we mark the seventh year since America experienced the worst terrorist attacks in our history. We as a nation honor the memories of the Americans who died on that tragic day. We mourn with 3,000 families, including 700 families from New Jersey who lost loved ones. Over the past 7 years, wives, sisters, husbands, and sons have worked to rebuild their lives, their families, and their futures. They came from every walk of life, from every economic background. They have forged

ahead despite the uncertainty of what tomorrow would hold.

As one 30-year-old widow from Middletown, NJ, put it: There is no guidebook for how a mother of a toddler whose husband was killed by terrorists is supposed to carry on with her life.

There is no instruction that is satisfactory. There is no help that is fully accommodated. But these folks have carried on. Many have done it by joining together and giving each other hope. They came together to trade stories about their lives, about the men and women they lost, to drive each other to support groups, to pick up each other's kids from schools, to celebrate birthdays, and to fight for a shared cause. Remember, it was the families of the victims who regularly piled into the minivans, came to Washington, pushed lawmakers to create the 9/11 Commission. Despite the shock they experienced and the sadness they still felt, they were committed to the future, to try to make sure that a tragedy such as this would never happen again to anyone.

That commitment led to crucial policy recommendations, such as improvements in port security and sending Federal funds to cities and towns based on the most vulnerable to terrorist attack. We had debate on the Senate floor about whether port security funds would be distributed on the basis of risk, as recommended by the 9/11 Commission, or distributed based on politics. We fought and made sure in the last couple of years to direct those funds to areas of most vulnerability.

I was once, before I came to the Senate, commissioner of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. I worked in the World Trade Center. I remember vividly traveling to my office on the 67th floor of the Twin Towers and looking out at the views from those towers, thinking about how invincible those buildings were, built with steel, concrete, a great design, a hundred stories high. Nothing, you believed, could ever happen there that would provide some insecurity for those who were working in the building. I remind everybody that we had a terrorist attack on the World Trade Center some years before 9/11, when people drove a truck loaded with explosives into the garage of the building, and it was detonated with great damage. But the building stood firm. Nothing could shake the well-being of that structure. But then we saw something different.

I got to know many port authority employees who perished when those massive towers collapsed. The port authority lost 84 of its own that day, including 37 members of the police department who died as they tried to rescue others, people who ventured into the dust and the heat and the destruction of the building trying to help others. They gave their lives, knowing very well that the position they were taking was one of great vulnerability, but they did it in any event.

Among the people lost was a very close friend of my daughter. Both of them worked downtown in a financial firm. My daughter left to go to law school, and her friend went to work for a company called Cantor Fitzgerald. She had three children. Her husband searched far and wide, from hospitals to clinics, every information source available, because he couldn't believe his wife was gone, that the mother of his children would no longer be there. After 3 weeks, after visiting all of the facilities searching for every bit of information he could find, he and his three young children were forced to accept her death.

There was a young man I knew, very energetic young man. He tried life as a golf professional. He learned computer skills. His name was Nicholas Lassman. He was still in his twenties. He described his enthusiasm to me one day about how he was looking forward to a new job that he had at the Trade Center. He perished that day.

We will always remember those who died, the firefighters, computer programmers. The firm, Cantor Fitzgerald, lost 700 of its employees that day. It is a firm I know very well. The President and CEO of that company, a very charitable, wonderful, still young fellow, whose lateness saved his life because he had to take his daughter to school, lost 700 others—700—including his brother and a lot of friends. This was a fellow who believed in loyalty as a trait above all for people in his organization. So he hired a lot of his friends from the place he grew up. I believe it was Brooklyn. Thusly, not only did his brother die, but lots of his friends perished during those same tragic moments.

The people who died left a loss that binds our Nation, and today, in New Jersey and across this country, we are honoring them in many ways.

There are events in New Jersey, events we saw this morning at Ground Zero. We had our moment of silence and our gathering together outside to hear some prayers and to listen to some music that reminds us of the greatness of our country.

In the city of Bayonne, we remember them at a monument called the Tear of Grief because Bayonne is one of those cities along the Hudson River from which lots of people commuted to the World Trade Center. The World Trade Center each day would see more than 50,000 people come there. It was like whole cities across our country. That is how big those buildings were. People would come—a lot by train, a lot by subway, by all kinds of means—who would come from all around the area to go to work or to have meetings there. So these are communities that are along the river, such as Bayonne.

Hoboken I was there at the dedication of a little park along the water-side that is called the Pier "A" Park. In Leonia—another town along the way—we remember them with two

granite towers that stand there as a reminder. In Jersey City there was a memorial put there called the Grove of Remembrance in Liberty State Park, just under the shadow of the Statue of Liberty—historic places.

But the best monument to those who died that day is to learn from the experience and to bring those perpetrators to justice and make our country safe. After that group of madmen destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the Pentagon, we vowed to search for those who orchestrated these terrible acts and to make them pay for their atrocious deeds. But we know they are still out there. In fact, 2,558 days since 9/11, terrorism is on the rise, more threatening, perhaps more obvious than at any time, more obvious than at any time predating 9/11.

Terrorism is there challenging us in places around the world, especially in our own country here. Al-Qaida is on the move. Osama bin Laden is still on the loose. What has happened? We have to continue the pursuit of these perpetrators so we can say to the people who are innocently living their lives that they need not be worried about a terrorist attack. But we have not done that yet. We still have to continue our obligation.

We have a ruthless enemy out there, one whose front line is our homefront. The stretch from Port Newark, NJ, our harbor, to Newark Liberty International Airport is defined by the FBI as the most dangerous 2-mile stretch in the country that invites a terrorist attack. I say, again, we had to fight to get funding to protect to the fullest extent we could that area, that target that, if attacked, would injure or kill as many as several million people. It is a highly populated area, with a big chemical manufacturer there. We had to have assistance from the Federal Government to make sure we mounted as much protection as we could.

On the anniversary of 9/11, we commemorate the memory of those who perished 7 years ago, and we stand with their families whose future is our cause. It is critical for their future, for their families, our families, that we continue to protect the country the victims died for, the loved ones they left behind, and the freedoms they hold dear.

I yield the floor with a thought as to the pictures I saw of what the reaction was from people around the world when they saw the attack on America that day. One picture was taken in Israel, a very dear, vital friend to America. In that little country, that tiny country, people were weeping for America, crying giant tears—this small country for the giant—to put things into perspective to understand how this attack menaced everybody in the world no matter what their distance was from us, that they cried for America. We must not permit such an act of terrorism to happen again.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, on an otherwise beautiful September morning 7

years ago today, our Nation experienced the greatest of tragedies. The United States was brutally and deliberately attacked. Terrorists took innocent American lives on sovereign American soil.

This tragedy was brought to our shores by those who seek to destroy the American dream. The perpetrators declared war on the clearest symbols of our way of life: The Twin Towers in Manhattan, the center of American capitalism and prosperity; the Pentagon in Arlington, VA, a building that represents the strongest guarantor of freedom in history. A third target, either the White House or the U.S. Capitol, was spared only because of the brave and selfless passengers aboard United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed near Shanksville, PA.

The Civil War once tested the survivability of a nation founded on the concept that every citizen is endowed with fundamental freedoms. In the 7 years since September 11, we have tested America's devotion to these founding principles, bringing to this body a debate over where to draw the line between protecting liberties and preventing another attack. As a nation, I believe we have found a balanced solution to this challenge. And when we remember and defend the truths our founding fathers knew to be self-evident, we strengthen them for the next generation. We have done this all the while defending this great nation from another attack. And that is an accomplishment worth noting.

I know that in this hyper political season, we sometimes fail to see beyond daily politics and rhetoric. But it is my hope that as we continue to examine our freedoms in the context of fighting terrorism, we will not lose sight of what they mean for us here at home. This morning, President Bush dedicated the Pentagon Memorial in remembrance of 184 innocent Americans taken from us that morning. We do not identify the fallen as old or young, man or woman, black or white, Jewish or Protestant. We identify them as fellow Americans, all deserving of the same inalienable rights.

I thank and pray for our troops overseas, fighting to keep us safe here at home. I thank and pray for the survivors and families of those who have fallen in the defense of this great Nation. And I thank and pray for all those who remind us why this nation is worth defending. The United States will indeed persevere and will continue to serve as the finest example of a nation founded and dedicated to Liberty and justice for all.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, on this solemn occasion in our national life, we pause with deep-seated reverence to remember and honor those who perished in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and we do so profoundly mindful of those families and loved ones whose lives have been forever altered by the heinous events of 7 years ago.

At this time, we share in the grievous anguish that will always exact an unbearable toll on those convening to pay homage to family and loved ones lost at Ground Zero in lower Manhattan, in Shanksville, PA, and in the Pentagon, where today there will be a ceremony, marking the official dedication of the Pentagon Memorial which will pay tribute to the 184 lives lost in the Pentagon and on American Airlines flight 77. Amid the arduous trial and pain that this date in our history evokes, we find mutual solace in the revelation that none of us grieves alone that, on this day, those whom we will never know are kept in our thoughts and prayers and that there are no strangers among us only Americans.

While we will never escape the unspeakable horror and inconsolable devastation that this anniversary represents to each and every one of us, at the same time, we cannot help but recall the countless remembrances of the indomitable spirit of the American people, who have, time and again, demonstrated a collective resilience and resolve to battle back despite inexpressible sorrow, and who have displayed a courageous summoning of purpose to move forward in the face of wrenching desolation. And so this year, as in times past, we face the indescribable inhumanity of those dark morning hours, but we are renewed and buoyed by the unfolding story from 2001 to the present of a resurgent nation that will overcome any adversity, no matter how perilous or daunting.

And nowhere is that inspiration, heart, and character more prevalent than in our recollection of the heroic sacrifice and noble devotion of firefighters, police officers, and rescue workers. The fearless and selfless example of seemingly ordinary Americans performing extraordinary deeds in the service of others will serve through time immemorial as an enduring and powerful testament that good will triumph over evil and that those benevolent forces that would seek to uplift humankind will ultimately prevail over those treacherous elements that would conspire to bring it down.

Time can never diminish the cascade of emotions we experience as we strive to comprehend how such vicious savagery could exist in the world and could be perpetrated so ruthlessly against innocent people. And those feelings only intensify when we put faces with names, and they become especially personal when we reflect upon Mainers whom we have lost—Anna Allison, Carol Flyzik, Robert Jalbert, Jacqueline Norton, Robert Norton, James Roux, Robert Schlegel, and Stephen Ward. Their lives were tragically cut short, but their memory is eternally etched upon our hearts.

As we confront once again these unforgivably grave and wicked injustices, we are also gratefully sustained by the supreme service and unfailing contribution of our exceptional men and women in uniform who protect and

defend our way of life. Whether on shores or soil here at home or around the globe, their steadfast sense of duty and bravery are an inspiration to us all, their commitment steels our determination, and their valor and professionalism steady our hand in an uncertain world.

Like every American, I vividly remember every detail of the morning of September 11, 2001, and how the day began with such beautiful blue skies, only to end with a nation grief-stricken and stunned in utter disbelief. In Washington, DC, I watched the images along with the rest of the world. Later, as the Sun set over the National Mall still capped by smoke billowing from the wound in the side of the Pentagon I joined my colleagues in the House and Senate on the Capitol steps in singing, "God Bless America."

We sang to send a message to the country and to the world that we would never be deterred that freedom is forged by something far more resolute than any act of terror a conviction that has only strengthened with each anniversary. While we extol those whom we have lost, we hold fast to the belief that the greatest memorial is to embrace all that we have retained as a nation from our inception and that the principles of liberty and justice and the primacy of self-government cannot be extinguished that we as a people will endure as long as we persevere shoulder-to-shoulder as Americans.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we have had two ceremonies today: one at the Pentagon and one on the west steps remembering what happened 7 years ago. I think everyone remembers what they were doing at that time 7 years ago. It happens that was the time I had the State chamber of commerce from my State of Oklahoma in. I was speaking with them. I remember so well being on the ninth floor of the Hart Building where we had a panoramic view. They were looking at me, and I saw all this smoke going up, not having any idea what it was. I actually witnessed what happened at the Pentagon.

Today as we think back, most of us know someone or have a friend who was killed on that fateful day in the greatest, most significant raid on our land in our country's history. Seven years later, we continue to fight for the oppressed and, more importantly, help the oppressed to fight for themselves. With our coalition of partners and allies, we continue to take the fight to the enemy of our place of choosing, keeping them there instead of here.

I had the privilege—and it really has been a privilege—to be in the area where the terrorists were, I think, more than any other Member. I have made some 18 trips, maybe more than that, to Africa, the Horn of Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, and that area. We have taken away al-Qaida's base of operations, freedom of movement, forcing them into the no-man's land between Pakistan and Afghanistan. We have trained the Afghan National Army as they have grown to 65,000 troops. I am proud of this accomplishment. It was Oklahoma's 45th in charge of training the Afghan Army. I was over there, and I saw the pride in the faces of the Afghans as they were learning to defend themselves, learning to fight, learning to fight with dignity. We have trained the Afghan National Army as they have grown to 65,000 troops, and they are on track to meet their mandated strength of 82,000 by 2009.

We have defeated the Taliban in every encounter and have killed or captured over 60 of their senior leaders. We helped Afghanistan rebuild its infrastructure with over 1,000 bridges and 10,000 kilometers of roads. There are now more Afghan children in school than at any other time in history.

That is something we seem to forget, turning to Iraq, what is happening right now and the impact this is having in the Middle East where for the first time in the history of that country there are women going to school. They have been liberated from a tyrannical leader.

I was honored back in 1991 to be on what was called the first freedom flight. It was Democrats and Republicans. Tony Coelho was there and several others. But also the Ambassador from Kuwait to the United States was there. This was in 1991 at the end of the first gulf war. It was so close to the end of it that Iraq did not know it was over yet. They were still burning the fields off.

The Ambassador and his daughter—he had a 7- or 8-year-old daughter—wanted to see what their mansion on the Persian Gulf looked like because they had not seen it during the war. When we got there, we found it was used by Saddam Hussein for one of his headquarters. The little girl wanted to go to her bedroom and see her little animals. Saddam Hussein had used that bedroom for a torture chamber. There were body parts there.

During that period after 1991, many of us had the opportunity to look into the open graves, to see what a tyrannical person this was, hear the stories from firsthand observers who said people were begging to be dropped into the vats of acid head first or into the grinders.

Weapons of mass destruction were used on the Kurds up north, and hundreds of thousands of people were killed. The way he killed them with the type of gas, it was like burning yourself up from the inside. People described what the people went through.

Some on this floor and a lot of people on the campaign trail say no terrorists were in Iraq prior to the liberation. Evidence has shown the contrary. I say this because, first of all, if there had never been even a discussion of weapons of mass destruction, just the things that this guy had done to the hundreds of thousands of people was enough justification for going in. We, as a free nation, cannot allow that type of thing to happen.

Now we find, yes, there were terrorist training camps there. Sargat was an international training camp in northeastern Iraq near the Iranian border. It was run by Ansar al-Islam, a known terrorist organization. Based on information from the U.S. Army Special Forces, operators who led the attack on Sargat said it is more than plausible that al-Qaida members trained in that particular area. The Green Berets discovered among the dead in Sargat foreign ID cards, airline ticket receipts, visas, and passports from Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Morocco, and many other places.

Salman Pak was the name of another city there. That is where we found the fuselage of a 707. That is where they were training people—all the evidence was there—to hijack airlines. That was a terrorist training camp. That is in Iraq.

I don't think we will ever know whether the perpetrators of the tragedy 7 years ago today were trained in Salman Pak. I don't think there is any way of ever knowing that. Certainly, that is what they were doing at that time.

So in the aftermath of September 11 we have worked together to do things to preclude this kind of attack from happening—the PATRIOT Act, we created the Department of Homeland Security, the position of Director of National Intelligence to try to coordinate.

One of the things I remember when I came to the Senate from the House in 1994 is my predecessor was David Boren who happened to have been the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. He said: I am hoping you may be able to do something I have never been able to do, and that is to get all these competing intelligence agencies—such as DIA and others—to work together. That wasn't happening until 9/11. That shock treatment is what it took to get people to work together. In doing so, we know many potential attacks on our country have been prevented.

When we look at what we are commemorating today and the people we know, the loved ones we lost, we recognize we have done some things we should have done before probably. Those of us who have traveled to Israel know they live from day to day not knowing if, when they are sitting in a coffee shop, it is going to blow up or when getting on a bus there are going to be bombs going off. They have learned to live with it. We now have

learned the lesson of 7 years ago. We have taken precautions. We have prevented attacks from happening. We have evidence of all kinds of things—water systems that were going to be contaminated—and we think of the tragedy of 7 years ago today.

If we look at the potential tragedy of an incoming missile hitting a major city in America, we would be looking at maybe 300,000 people. That is what it is all about now: making sure nothing of this dimension or anything else will happen again.

This is a very special day, and it is one that is very meaningful to most of us—I think to all Americans. One thing we can do is remember, remember that terrorists are still out there. I was asked on a radio show this morning: There are so many people out there saying, why don't you just forget this thing? That was 7 years ago. Why keep bringing it up? Why keep stirring it up? Why can't we get beyond that?

My response was we cannot do that because of what happened to so many people. But more importantly than that is this is a constant reminder. Every year we need to be reminded that there are terrorists still out there. They hate everybody who is in this building, and they hate this building. You think about what could have happened 7 years ago if those very brave people in Pennsylvania hadn't stopped what was happening. This dome, most likely, would not be here. It was an easy target. That is the reminder.

The terrorists are still out there. They still want to kill us. They are still cowards. They still have no country and they have no cause, except to destroy us. So this reminder is here today, and I just, at this time, want to pay homage once again to the families of all those who lost their loved ones in the tragedy that took place.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009—Continued

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the growing rate of suicide among Iraq and Afghanistan-era veterans. For all that is being done in this country to support our troops in battle, we must remember this truth: For many veterans, their battles do not end when they return from the war. Instead, war returns home with them and within them. That is a truth. Instead, they face an enemy that is hard to understand and harder to defeat. Their wounds and their enemy are unseen, but the reality and sometimes

the deadly consequences of these invisible wounds cannot be ignored.

I am deeply troubled by the latest information we have received from VA. The number of veterans lost to the enemy of suicide is rising. Suicide among Iraq and Afghanistan-era veterans is at an alltime high. The most recently recorded year—2006—saw 113 Iraq and Afghanistan-era veterans lost to suicide, almost as many as we lost in the years 2002 to 2005 combined. This is disturbing.

Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are not the only ones suffering from service-related mental health injuries. Indeed, the number of veterans found to have service-connected PTSD is not just rising, it is rising several times faster than service-connected disabilities overall. Nor are suicide and mental health only a matter of concern among discharged veterans. Recent news reports show that suicides among Active-Duty soldiers are positioned to reach an alltime high, exceeding last year's record number.

Much is being done to protect and heal veterans with mental health issues. VA has expanded mental health outreach. The Vet Centers, run largely for vets and by vets, offer a safe haven and readjustment counseling. For those in desperate need, VA now operates a 24-hour suicide hotline. In the 1 year it has been operating, they have received tens of thousands of calls and performed over a thousand rescues of veterans about to take their own lives.

Unfortunately, these efforts are not enough. Veterans are committing suicide at a higher rate than their civilian counterparts. A recent RAND study found that nearly three out of four veterans in need of mental health care receive inadequate care or no care at all. This cannot be acceptable to a nation intent on protecting those who wear its uniform. More must be done in the days ahead, and not just by VA.

This Congress took an important step by passing the Joshua Omvig Suicide Prevention Act. But in the final weeks of this session, comprehensive veterans mental health legislation is still waiting for a vote in the House. Through S. 2162, the Veterans' Mental Health Care Improvement Act, which passed the Senate with unanimous support, Congress can do more to prevent veteran suicide. Congress can strengthen veterans' mental health care, outreach, support the homeless, services for families, and leverage community resources. I hope this critical legislation will become law before this Congress ends.

PTSD and other service-related invisible wounds are real injuries. They are also an enemy to veterans, to the families who support them, and to all Americans. It is not enough to bring our troops home; we must support them when the battle follows them home. It is unacceptable that veterans who come home safely later lose their lives to the enemy of suicide. We must do more to support those who have served us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 5413

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to amendment No. 5413. I hope at some point to be able to call up that amendment and perhaps have it either included as part of the managers' package or have it debated and voted upon. Let me explain a little bit about the history of this and why I think this is so important to our Nation's military.

The Defense Department authorization bill we have before us is a critical piece of legislation that we need as a Congress to deal with before Congress adjourns. We have done that for the past 42 years. It sets the policy and the framework and funding for matters that are important to our men and women in uniform and important to making America safe and secure as we head into the future. I believe this amendment fits right in with that overall objective. The amendment to which I speak today will advance innovative Air Force programs that are already positively affecting the critically important and complex issue of energy policy. As I said, that is a national security issue as well.

Furthermore, this amendment will expand these valuable programs to other Department of Defense services.

As we all know, the issue of fuel prices has significant implications not only for our economic security, but also for our military. In fact, the Department of Defense is the largest single consumer of fuel in the United States.

Consider this: In the last 4 years, the Air Force fuel bill has tripled. Furthermore, the Air Force spent over \$6 billion buying energy last year, even though they used 10 percent less than the year before. This is a substantial sum, and I can almost guarantee it will cost the Air Force more next year to buy the same amount of energy. As the lead paragraph in an article headlined "Worries of Rising Fuel Costs Extend to DoD's Budget" published in Defense News on May 19, 2008, noted:

The skyrocketing cost of fuel isn't just hitting U.S. drivers in the pocketbook—it's blowing a bit of a hole in the Pentagon's budget as well.

I ask unanimous consent that the entirety of this Defense News article be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. (See exhibit 1.)

Mr. THUNE. We are at a moment in our history when we must move toward more secure, domestic energy sources.